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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

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SERIAL RECORDS

IT'S CO-OP TIME

Working Together. There are all kinds of cooperatives doing all kinds of things to help people and that's why the folks who run the co-ops like to talk about them. In fact, they set aside October to talk about them. Many events will be held throughout the nation to mark the October observance. However, this year's theme "Cooperatives--Community Builders" may best be articulated in eleven national meetings across the country; the schedule of which pretty well spells out the diversity of cooperative enterprise in the United States: Oct. 3, Farm Credit Co-ops, Omaha, Nebr.; Oct. 7, Farmer Co-ops, Madison, Wis.; Oct. 8, Telephone Co-ops, Billings, Mont.; same day, Electric Co-ops, Raleigh, N.C.; Oct. 17, Credit Unions, Boston, Mass.; Oct. 17-19, Opportunity Co-ops, Santa Fe, N.M.; Oct. 19, Opportunity Co-ops, Selma, Ala.; Oct. 25, Forestry Co-ops, Jackson, Miss.; Oct. 26, Housing Co-ops, N.Y. City; Oct. 29, Health Co-ops, Seattle, Wash.; and Oct. 30, Co-op Stores, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

LESS PUSH TO PRICES

Better News for Christmastime. The recent advance in the retail cost of the market basket food is expected to slow materially in the last half of '68, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture economists. Prospects for large supplies of fruits and vegetables, continued large supplies of meat, and a slower rise in income will reduce upward pressures on food prices. This might also ease the cost for holiday menus.

A CHEAPER AND BETTER SOURCE

Is Soy Protein the Answer? One of the answers to the problem of the short supply of protein around the world is to use soy protein. The yield of edible protein per acre of soybeans is one of the highest of all plant or animal protein sources, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Nutritionally, the soybean protein quality is the best available from plant sources. It is used now for bakery products, vegetable protein foods and beverages. Soy protein use in foods has increased about five to seven percent annually during 1965-67. In 1968 the use is also expected to be increasing. You'll probably be hearing more about expanded uses in both domestic and foreign markets, according to USDA forecasters who are in touch with marketing and food technologists.

LETTUCE--ALL YEAR ROUND

Price Depends on Supply. What can't be left in the field--can't be stored--and must be cut, packed and shipped as soon as it's mature? Lettuce, that's what. Whether it's ready to harvest or not depends entirely on the weather. Ninety percent of our year-round supply of iceberg lettuce comes from California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The rest of the lettuce comes from different parts of the United States at various seasons during the year. The price for lettuce on the farm is determined each day, based on:

> Supplies on hand nationally--and how quickly they are moving into retail stores; previous day's shipments and prices; the supply expected to be shipped that day; and price being paid by retailers to wholesalers at terminal markets in large cities.

These facts are reported daily by the Federal-State Market News Service--to help assure you of a steady supply of lettuce, year round.

READERS, TAKE NOTE--A CORRECTION

Spring Will Be A Little Later Than We Thought. The new azalea varieties we told you about in the September issue of SERVICE will not be available for 1969 spring of fall planting. The varieties are expected to be ready for distribution to commercial nurseries at that time--but, to home gardeners maybe a year or so later.

MAKE IT SOFT AND SWEET

Consumers--All Ages. Soft drink consumption is on the rise and per capita consumption of candy is growing too according to basic data supplied to U. S. Department of Agriculture reports. Soft drink consumption was four percent higher in 1967 than the previous year. The beverage industry, largest commercial user of refined sugar, accounted for 18 percent of total sugar consumption this year. Low-calorie soft drinks apparently have cut very little into the growing consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks, according to the records. The figures for per capita consumption of candy shows a total of 19.6 pounds in 1967, up 16 percent since 1960. That's a lot of sweetness.

GARDEN LOVERS, TAKE NOTE

A Beautification Project For The Great Indoors. Why not start an indoor garden for decorative plants? The U. S. Department of Agriculture recently published a booklet describing ways to build six types of indoor gardens with suggested locations and types of plants. Plans described include a free standing round garden and a wall garden mounted on a folding screen. High intensity fluorescent lamps illuminate the plants 12-16 hours daily to provide enough daylight for the plants to thrive. Most conventional house plants may grow in this environment--as will plant collections; mosses, ivies, and orchids. "Indoor Gardens for Decorative Plants," Home and Garden Bulletin No. 133 may be ordered from the U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402--Price 10 cents.

FOOD STORES AND THE INCOME AREA

Study Shows No Price Bias. A recent U. S. Department of Agriculture study in six cities found no consistent differences in prices charged by stores of the same chain located in low and high income areas. Though there was some variation from store to store in prices of individual items, most of these were small. In the entire survey, there were only five out of 130 purchases where the shopper did not receive the benefit of a price reduction when the package had a cents-off label. A few checker errors were noted, but overall, these were found to favor consumers more often than the store. Quality of the meat purchases was subjected to laboratory analyses for various quality factors. Of the 244 samples of frankfurters tested, only a few contained more than the Federal tolerances for water added.

THE PROVERBIAL LOAF OF BREAD

The Marketing Spread. It helps if you understand. The farmer's share of the retail price of bread was only about 15 percent in 1967 compared to 25 percent in 1947-9. During the 50's, the average retail price advanced by 3.2 percent a year. During the 60's, however, the rate of increase slowed considerably with an advance of 1.8 percent a year. Higher costs for baking, distributing and retailing bread account for the yearly increases. Actually, only 3.4 cents of the average price--22.2 cents--paid by consumers for a pound loaf of white bread in 1967 was received by the farmer for wheat and other ingredients of farm origin. This is only one-tenth of one cent more than he received for these ingredients in 1947-9, when a loaf of bread sold for 13.5 cents.

SEVEN THOUSAND "KNOWN" VARIETIES

There's Brown Rice...and Then There's White Rice. U. S. Department of Agriculture nutritionists say if you're looking for the most nutritious variety of rice you should select brown rice--only its hull is removed in milling. The bran remaining contains B complex vitamins and minerals. Around the world there are at least 7,000 known varieties of rice. If you want to use rice for a side dish, use the long grain variety. Its grains are tender and usually remain separated after cooking. Short and medium grain are moist and sticky when cooked--better for puddings and hot breads. The average American eats 7.3 pounds of rice a year--just as he did in 1909, according to USDA records.

MAKING SURE IT'S SAFE

If You Can Eat It--We Can Test It. Did you know that the U. S. Department of Agriculture dairy laboratory tests some highly special, speciality products--would you think wild boar meat? The range of products extends from wild boar meat, goose livers, dehydrated chicken soup, dried and frozen eggs to dry cream substitute. The emphasis is on bacteriological testing for the wholesomeness and keeping quality of the product. The scientists can also test for the presence of pesticides and salmonella...the bacteria that cause infection of the digestive tract.

PICK THE PLENTIFULS

October Food Buys. Shades of autumn bring thoughts of succulent pork roasts and all the ways of serving apples. Harvest time dinners might include other plentifuls of potatoes, rice, dry beans, and cheese.

FROM ROOT TIP TO CROWN TOP

How A Tree Grows. Maybe teachers can't take their students to the forests to show new growth on trees--or how annual rings reveal the age of a tree. A bright color wall chart developed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service may do the job. Another valuable color chart for studying products from trees which grow on commercial forest land is called "What We Get From Trees." Almost seven-tenths of our commercial forest land is privately owned. Thirty-two percent is owned by the Federal Government, states, counties, cities, and villages. "How A Tree Grows," FS-8 and "What We Get From Trees," M5-293 may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Price, 20 cents each.

FOOD FOR THE FAMILY

How Much Does It Cost? Do you feed a family of two...or four? How does your spending compare with the U. S. Department of Agriculture estimates of weekly costs of well balanced meals at home? USDA reports costs quarterly for food plans at three levels; low, moderate, and liberal. The quantities of food included are based on family food consumption surveys adjusted to provide a recommended intake of nutrients. Based on the three levels in June 1968, the cost per week was:

	Ages	
Family of Two	20-35 Years	55-75 Years
Low-cost plan	$16.70	$13.60
Moderate-cost plan	21.10	17.70
Liberal-cost plan	25.80	21.10

Family of Four	Pre-school	Grade School
Low-cost plan	$24.20	$28.20
Moderate-cost plan	30.70	35.90
Liberal-cost plan	37.20	43.80

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Shirley E. Wagener, Editor of SERVICE, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Information, Washington, D.C. 20250. Please include your zipcode.